

Columbian Exposition Store Buildings
East 57th Boulevard and South Stony Island Avenue
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1062

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
63A-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION STORE BUILDINGS

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Location: East 57th Boulevard and South Stony Island Avenue; Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. The buildings were on the north and south sides of East 57th Boulevard and extended a short distance around the corner to the north and south, on the west side of Stony Island Avenue.

Present Owners: The City of Chicago and the American National Bank and Trust Company.

Present Use: The buildings were being demolished at the time of this report, August, 1963.

Statement of Significance: The buildings were associated with the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. One of the few remaining structures from the fair, they were an artists' and writers' center for many years afterwards.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners (Chain of title):

Legal description of the property: The buildings are located on two lots, one on either side of East 57th Boulevard. Lot 1 of Re-subdivision of the North 3 acres, East of the Illinois Central Railroad, of the East 23 acres of the Southeast quarter of the Northeast quarter Section 14-38-14; and Lot 14 of Re-subdivision of Block 68 in Hyde Park, being a Subdivision of the East half of the Southeast quarter and East half of the Northeast fractional quarter of Section 11-38-14, North part of Southwest fractional quarter Section 12-38-14, and Northeast quarter of Section 14-38-14.

The following is an abstract of the chain of title contained in Book 353B, pp. 227-229, and Book 352, p. 469, in the Cook County Recorder's Office.

Lot 1 was originally owned by Osgood McFarland, recorded May 8, 1880 (Document 270973). On January 8, 1881, McFarland sold the north 17 feet of his lot to the South Park Commissioners. This is part of the present Boulevard controlled by the Chicago Park District. On March 31, 1890 Frank I. Bennett, Frank R. Chandler, and Frederick C. Gibbs

are mentioned as owners of various portions of the lot (Documents 1242844 and 1242853). It appears that Gibbs controlled the property until his death in 1945 (Document 441/201). It is now owned by the American National Bank and Trust Company.

Lot 14 was originally owned by Hannah B. Dyche, recorded June 10, 1874 (Document 174330). On April 17, 1876, Dyche sold the south 17 feet of her lot to the South Park Commissioners; this also became part of the Boulevard. On December 7, 1880 Peyton R. Chandler purchased the property (Document 300515) and, in various combinations, appears to have continued as owner. Helen Gotsis et al. purchased the property from Laura Gibbs Harokins on September 11, 1946 (Document 138900008). Gotsis sold it to the City of Chicago on October 20, 1961 (Document 18308440).

2. Date of erection: c. 1893. Maps in the Chicago Historical Society indicate that the stores were built between 1890 and 1895.
3. Architect: Unknown.

B. Bibliography:

Note: The Library of the Chicago Historical Society and the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago have over 200 items in their combined collections which deal directly with the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. This includes books, pamphlets, clippings, and manuscripts. The following bibliography lists only those sources examined in this study.

Burnham, Daniel Hudson, and Millet, Francis Davis. World's Columbian Exposition, The Book of the Builders. Chicago: Columbian Memorial Publication Society, 1894.
General material.

Cambell, James B. Cambell's Illustrated History of the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago: Published by the author, 1894.
General material.

Cameron, William Evelyn. History of the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago: Columbian History Company, 1893.

Concession agreements, 1891-1893, 7 volumes. In the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.
May contain references to the 57th Street stores.

"Condensed official catalogue of interesting exhibits in the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893." Chicago: W. B. Conkey

Company, 1893. In the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

General material.

Donnelly, Marian C. HABS Inventory, June 15, 1963.

Duffey, Bernard. Chicago Literary Movements, 1890-1925.

Chicago: Newberry Library Conference on American Studies, 1952. Pp. 14-15.

_____. The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters. The Michigan State College Press, 1954.

Handy, Moses P. (ed.) The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition, May 1 to October 3, 1893. Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1893. In the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

Industrial Chicago. Six volumes. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1894. Vol. IV, pp. 327-345.
General material on the World's Columbian Exposition.

Miscellaneous clippings on the World's Columbian Exposition.
Clippings in the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

Official Views of the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago: Department of Photography World's Columbian Exposition Co., 1893. In the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

Walton, William. Arts and Architecture. Three volumes. Philadelphia: G. Barrie Publisher, 1893-1895.
General material on the architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition.

"What to See and How to Find It, Gems of the Fair." Chicago: World's Fair and Chicago Guide Co., 1893. In the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.
General material.

C. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. The store buildings were not located in the fairgrounds proper, but were across the street from the northwest entrance to the grounds. Some fairgrounds' maps do not even indicate East 57th Boulevard, which suggests that the street was not yet developed in 1893.

In recent years, the buildings were used for small shops, bookstores, and artists' studios.

2. The following information on the original developers is from The Lakeside Annual Business Directory of the City of Chicago, 1893. Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1893. P. 254.

Bennett, Frank I. & Co. (Frank I. and George R. Bennett and L. D. Cortwright) real estate 1002, 100 Washington, Tel. Main 1300.

Chandler & Co. (Peyton R. and Frank R. Chandler) mortgage bankers, 110 Dearborn, Tel. Main 1089.

Gibbs, Frederick C. real est. 106 to 108, 115 Dearborn.

3. Duffey, Bernard. Chicago Literary Movements, 1890-1925. Chicago: Newberry Library Conference on American Studies, 1952. Pp. 14-15. Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

The new generation's concern was reflected directly in its habitat and manners. . . .the younger [Chicago group] was to find its most congenial surroundings among outlying areas in a group of ramshackle store buildings. . . . It was in April of 1913 that Floyd Dell and Margery Currey, having then decided upon a separation, moved from their Rogers Park apartment to separate studios in a group of buildings which lined both sides of the thickly settled 57th street for one block west of Stone Island Avenue, and on the south, coming around the corner to run half a block down the avenue itself. This diminutive [sic] Latin Quarter had been erected as a series of uniform, one-story frame buildings, properly gingerbreaded, to house stores which had lined a main approach to the World's Fair of 1893. Since that date they had been occupied largely by Bohemians, chiefly anonymous, but counting among their number, according to tradition, Thorstein Veblen.

. . .the buildings to be sure, were flimsy in the extreme though they stand today largely unchanged and are housing artists still. Each one consisted of a single large store room with display windows at the street front and few windows elsewhere. Temporary partitions were erected though they fell far short of reaching high ceilings. Originally decorated curtains could be hung in the windows to afford some degree of privacy and a capital chance for self-expression. Little could be done about plumbing which consisted of one iron sink per building. As in the case of all Bohemians, the crowning glory of this one was its cheapness.

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August, 1963.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

Architectural character: These were rows of simple frame buildings with interesting store fronts.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Paired L-shape rows of stores, one story high, each 18' wide x 60' deep.
2. Foundations: Heavy wood sills laid on grade.
3. Wall construction: Store fronts are of wood and glass; the side and rear walls are clapboard.
4. Structural system, framing: Balloon frame, 2" x 14" floor joists laid on wood sills; 2" x 4" stud walls. 16" on center; 2" x 10" roof joists 12" on center; 2" x 4" ceiling joists 16" on center.
5. Chimneys: Small brick chimneys in party walls.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Each storefront's center doorway is recessed 3'-0" from the face of the building. Wooden doors have large single lights above two small panels. Paneled wooden doors in rear.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Large single lights, up to 4'-6" x 10'-0" in area flank doors and doorways; windows framed by slender single wooden colonettes at corners and by paired colonettes between shops. Sills are 14" above sidewalk. No shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape and covering: Nearly flat roofs, sloping slightly to the rear.

- b. Cornice, eaves: Slightly projecting molded cornice over high fascia; false gable over each store with concave sloping sides; sawn interlace ornament on face, balustrades run between adjoining gables.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: Rows of shops, each shop a single open room.
- 2. Flooring: $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wooden flooring.
- 3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on wooden lath.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The stores faced north and south on both sides of East 57th Boulevard, and east on South Stony Island Avenue. This was originally an approach to the main entrance of the Columbian Exposition Fairgrounds.

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August, 1963